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Northampton Mercury

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2015

BRINGING YOU THE NEWS SINCE 1720

SUMMER WARNING OF ROADWORKS AHEAD

SEE PAGE 3

The Battle of Northampton marked at family day

■ A family fun day at Delapre Abbey commemorated the Battle of Northampton on Saturday. The event included a knights' tournament and a living history camp.
■ See more pictures of the event in this week's Chronicle & Echo

EMPTY SITE NEEDS A PLAN

PRESERVATION GROUP SUPPORTS SCHEME TO DEVELOP VACANT CASTLE SITE

The director of a charity that helps to preserve St Peter's Church in Northampton town centre said he had no problem with 30 new houses being built on vacant land opposite the 12th century building.

Last week Northamptonshire County Council announced it was inviting architects to submit designs for a housing development on the site of the former Castle House in Marefair. The plan has been forcefully opposed by Marie Dickie, chairman of Friends of Northampton Castle (FONC), who believes the county council has gone back on a promise to turn the vacant site into a heritage park.

However, Peter Aiers, a director of the Churches Conservation Trust which looks after St Peter's Church – situated opposite the Castle House site – said he would not be unhappy with a housing development along as it was designed "sympathetically" to the surrounding area. He said: "We have lobbied the council that there should be something on the site that is either housing or commercial. There needs to be people and activity on the site, although the plans need to be prepared with a great deal of creativity. The housing needs to be designed appropriately. If we don't like the plans then we will say so."

Mr Aiers said he believed there was still room for a heritage park on the site but believed the Castle House site wasn't the right place as the 'building line' of the street, which has existed for hundreds of years, needed to be maintained.

A spokesman for Northamptonshire County Council said the housing project was only "one part" of the wider Heritage Gateway scheme for Northampton. The spokesman said: "The wider masterplan for the project has proposals for an area of green space as well as a more specific plan focusing on the location of the site of the Northampton Castle. Firm proposals for these projects still need to be drawn up. We've had firm advice from English Heritage and other heritage professionals that we should maintain a built frontage at the former Castle House site. This is to respect the history of this urban area. The plans for the former Castle House site will ensure there is still a viewpoint from St Peter's Church to the Northampton Castle mound."

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Warning over road closures this summer

By Nick Spoors
Chief Reporter
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Road resurfacing will take place on Billing Road, Wellingborough Road, Barrack Road and Park Avenue North on consecutive weeks this summer.

People living in these areas have been warned by Northamptonshire Highways to expect disruption when the works begin, which is likely to be the first week in August, depending on levels of rainfall.

Work will be carried out in the following locations and in the following order, with two days' notice given via signs in each case:

- Billing Road – Barry Road to Park Avenue South
- Wellingborough Road – Abington Park Crescent and Booth Lane South
- Park Avenue North
- Broadmead Avenue to Wellingborough Road
- Barrack Road – Monarch Road to Lorne Road.

Once one set of works is complete, the next will start. Weather permitting, the works will finish by the end of August.

Residents have been warned to expect delays in Northampton town centre

A Northamptonshire Highways spokesman said: "Due to the nature of the works, and the large equipment involved, it is necessary to operate some traffic restrictions and temporary road closures, to maintain both the safety of the public and the workforce.

"This may mean some limited access to some properties during the works. Please think carefully about parking so as not to obstruct the works, to not get blocked in temporarily and to not obstruct the heavy plant and delivery trucks."

Northamptonshire Highways said drivers should allow extra time for their journeys and keep speed to a minimum.

Temporary move for Special Care Baby Unit

THE special care baby unit at Northampton General Hospital will be moved to a nearby ward for the remainder of the summer.

Workmen will overhaul Gosset Ward's ventilation system over the next three months, meaning seriously ill or premature newborns will be cared for in the temporary, but still very high-quality, surroundings of the paediatric assessment unit (PAU).

The PAU has in turn moved to Paddington Ward.

It means that the number of babies Gosset can take at one time has been halved from 20 to 10, but surrounding hospitals have been informed of the reduction in capacity should Gosset become full unexpectedly.

A hospital spokesman said: "All the paediatric and neonatal services will continue, but parents and carers are asked to keep visitors to a minimum while attending the PAU and Paddington Ward as there is limited space available."

The special care baby unit at Northampton General Hospital

Jessie J concert 'still going ahead as planned'

The Jessie J concert "is still going ahead as planned," organisers of her Northampton Alive at Delapre show say, despite the artist cancelling tour dates due to a mystery illness.

Posts on her Twitter and Instagram feeds revealed the 'Do it like a Dude' singer had undergone an operation for an as-yet-unknown illness last week.

The 27-year-old judge on Australia's version of The Voice posted pictures of herself recovering on a hospital bed, and shortly afterwards cancelled upcoming shows in Denmark, Bristol and Belgium as a result of 'medical advice', she revealed on Instagram.

Posts over the weekend have also revealed the singer was still suffering pain and was being administered morphine.

But a spokesperson for Northampton Borough Council said the singer has not cancelled her Alive at Delapre show, which is set for the grounds of Delapre Abbey on Saturday, July 18.

The spokesman said: "As far as we are aware, Jessie J's concert at Alive at Delapre on Saturday, July 18, is still going ahead as planned. We wish Jessie a speedy recovery."

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Charity creates garden for grieving families

By Paul Lynch
Reporter
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Plans for a new memorial garden at a Northampton cemetery for parents who have lost young children were approved by the borough council this week.

The authority's planning committee gave the green light to a bid by charity Northamptonshire SANDS to landscape an area by the grade II listed chapel at Towcester Road Cemetery.

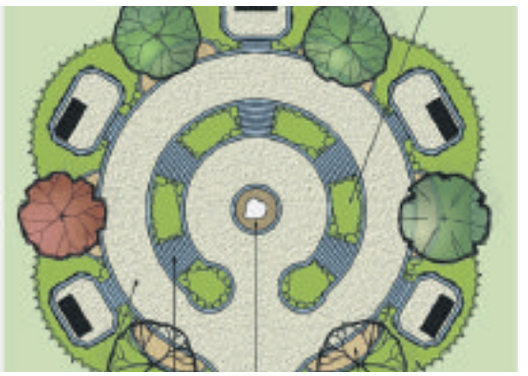
The new garden will be located 'adjacent to an area of the cemetery allocated for the burial of new babies', according to papers released by the borough council, and will contain trees, benches and a central sculpture of a 'baby held in hands'.

Planning officers recommended the scheme for approval, stating in a report: "It is considered the proposal would be in keeping with the character of the wider Towcester Road Cemetery and would not have any significantly detrimental impacts on the continuing use of the cemetery."

It added: "The proposal would be acceptable in principle and can be viewed as an enhancement of the existing cemetery as it would provide a community facility."

A planning statement by the applicant Northamptonshire SANDS, a stillbirth and neonatal death charity, said the new garden would provide "a valuable service for grieving families".

"Many parents do not have graves where they can visit," the statement added. "This is sometimes due to the fact they were cremated or that they have moved away from the are where their babies are buried. Some were never informed as to where their children were buried."



An artist's drawing of the new memorial garden

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Northamptonshire County Council has called for more funding in our schools

Campaign launch to get more money for pupils

By Alice Dyer
Web Editor
editor@northantsnews.co.uk

Pupils in the county get less funding from the Government than nearly every other local authority in the country, according to the county council.

The council has launched a campaign calling for the formula that divides money across local authorities to be reviewed.

In 2015/16, the council was allocated £4,293 per pupil. This compares to other areas such as Westminster, which was awarded £5,872 per pupil, and Brent, which received £5,357. Most neighbouring counties receive more money than Northamptonshire.

The county council says the current funding formula, which allocates different amounts of money to local education authorities per pupil, should be scrapped and a new national formula introduced to close the gap between the highest and lowest funded local authorities.

The council has now joined the campaign group f40, which represents the 40 lowest funded authorities in the country and is lobbying the Government for a reform of education funding.

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Cloudy2Clear service the Northampton, Kettering, Wellingborough & Corby areas and Trevor is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

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M20

TV star Joey Essex urges students to 'work hard'

Youngsters in Northampton need to 'work hard, believe in yourself and keep persevering' to make their dreams come true, according to reality TV star Joey Essex.

The celebrity, who shot to fame in The Only Way is Essex, was speaking at Northampton College's Outdoor Cinema event on Saturday, which saw thousands of people flock to the Booth Lane campus to watch films including Grease and Guardians of the Galaxy on a giant open-air screen.

He said: "I've always had to work for hard for everything I've had.

"I've always tried to stay true to myself and I've had this belief that all the hard work will pay off in the end.

"If I could give one piece of advice to all the young people at Northampton College, it would be to just keep going, keep persevering. Believe in yourself and it will come good for you."

The Outdoor Cinema was held to showcase the facilities on offer at Northampton College and open up the doors to the local community, giving them an insight into the courses available at the college's Booth Lane, Lower Mounts and Daventry campuses.

Assistant principal James Whybrow said: "It was a great way of getting the community into the building and seeing for themselves what we're all about and what we're trying to do.

"It was pleasing to see so many people come along on the day. It was a great event which was clearly very well received by the community and is something that we'll be looking to do more of in the future."

Joey Essex was the overwhelming choice following a vote among students of which celebrity they would most like to see appear at the Outdoor Cinema, while Grease and Guardians of the Galaxy were also chosen as the films to be shown following a similar poll.

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James Kouzaris and his friend, James Cooper, pictured on their travels

Run in James' memory

By Paul Lynch
Reporter
paul.lynch@jpress.co.uk

The second annual charity run is to take place in memory of popular Northampton man James Kouzaris.

James, aged 25, from Kingsthorpe, along with friend James Cooper, was shot and killed after wandering into a suburb in Florida in 2011.

Since their deaths, James Kouzaris' family and friends have organised a huge array of events in aid of the Always a Chance charity they set up in his memory. The latest is the second Jog for James run around Pitsford Reservoir on July 18.

Pete Kouzaris, James' dad, said: "It is even more poignant this year as it would have been James' 29th birthday. It is also fitting that we commemorate James' memory at Pitsford as it was a place where he loved to run and keep fit."

Always a Chance is now part of Northampton Community Foundation so the family are able to source their own projects which align with the charity's own ideals.

Over this period of time Always a Chance has handed out more than £20,000 to projects in Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire.

Mr Kouzaris said: "On behalf of myself, my wife Hazel and our daughter Emily, I would like to thank the organisers of this event, especially Geoff and Sally Hallett plus the army of helpers who have made this day possible and help James' name to live on."

Visit www.alwaysachance.org.uk for details.

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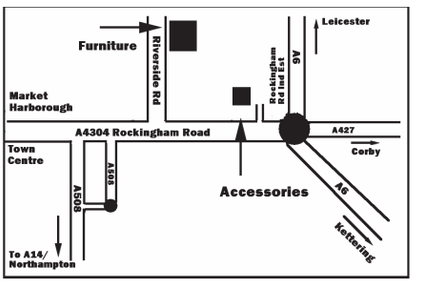

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House of Fraser joins Rushden Lakes line-up

HOUSE of Fraser is set to be part of the Rushden Lakes development, 15 months after it closed its Northampton store.

Rushden Lakes is expected to attract three million people a year

Council leaders in the south of the county warned that Rushden Lakes would have a negative effect on retail in Northampton during a planning inquiry last year.

House of Fraser will join M&S and H&M as the third big name for the scheme. Primark and Next now occupy house of Fraser's vacated Grosvenor Centre unit.

House of Fraser is named in documents submitted to East Northamptonshire Council by LXB, the developer behind Rushden Lakes, applying for minor alterations to the original plans. The changes relate to floorspace for the unit the retailer wants to occupy.

The planning document states: "A key driver for the proposed amendments is to meet the requirements of House of Fraser who will occupy anchor unit C1."

It comes 12 months after the Secretary of State granted permission for Rushden Lakes to go ahead and follows House of Fraser closing its Northampton branch in March 2014. Rushden Lakes is expected to attract three million visitors a year.

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Thursday, July 9, 2015

Motors

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There was no escaping the gleam in the eyes of the people I met while trying to plug the test Golf into a public charging point to add more free miles to the journey.

None of the drivers was in a Golf GTE – it's too new to see many on the road – but they were all solid converts of life with a battery doing the work.

Two were driving Nissan Leafs, an all-electric car that simply stops when the juice runs out (after 90 miles when I tried one), but their owners simply planned recharge stops, or contemplated hiring a conventional car for the occasional long drive.

The Golf GTE won't go anywhere near that far on electricity alone, with an optimistic 31 miles quoted by its maker. The best I managed, with air con off and never exceeding 50mph, was 24 miles.

All of them delightfully smooth and quiet, it must be said, as the electric motor pulled this spacious and quite weighty machine away from a standstill with the insistent strength of gravity turned on its side.

And when the electric power is spent, the petrol engine switches itself on and you proceed with a little more noise from up front but with a range only limited by finding a filling station.

Topping up the battery from a three pin domestic plug takes under four hours and costs pence.

It was faster – and free – from the charge points I found in a couple of town centres, but be warned, the big white rapid charging boxes at motorway services won't work on the GTE.

Volkswagen Golf GTE

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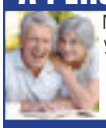

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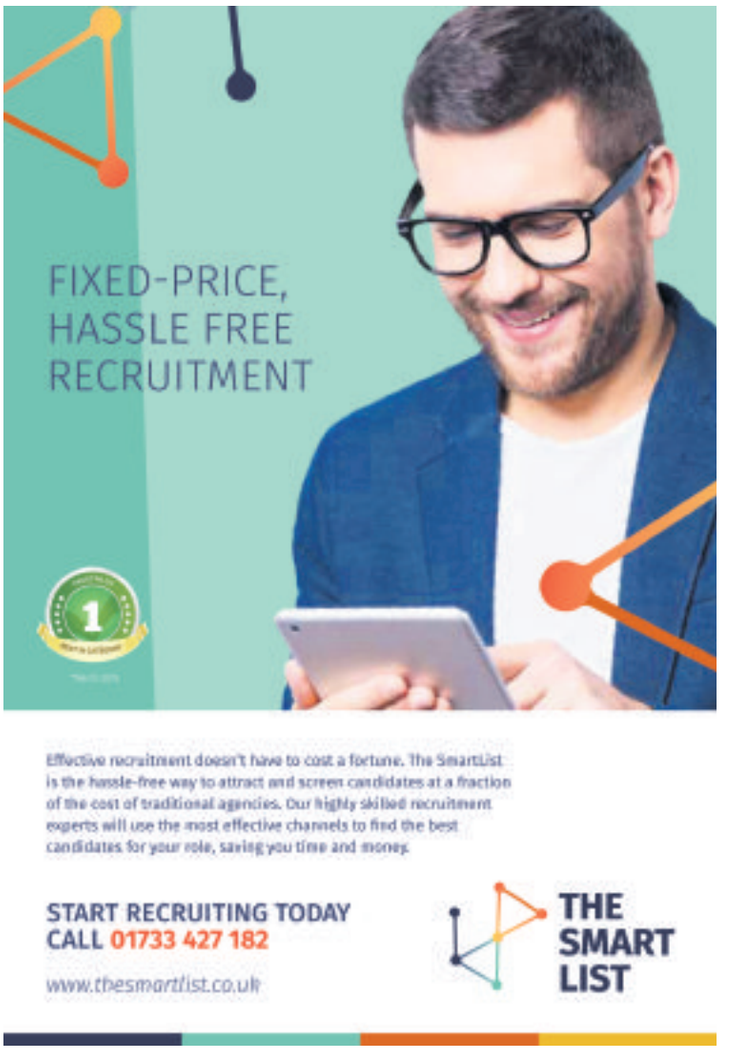

Promotion

Registration for the latest JobsToday virtual careers fair has now opened

Jobstoday have opened registration for their latest national Virtual Careers Fair to connect talented job seekers to local and national employers.

The Virtual Careers Fair is an online platform where job seekers can browse top companies from across the UK, connect in a real time environment and apply for advertised vacancies; all for FREE and from the comfort of their computers. Proven a popular platform with both employers and job seekers alike, the 12 day fair will take place from the 2nd September to the 13th September.

Exciting online features include chat and video technology; businesses can bring to life their vacancies while job seekers can speak to employers to really show off their skills and expertise to help them land their next job. Job seekers can also take advantage of the compatibility test which allows them to find out which companies are most suited to them.

A wide range of employers will be attending to suit every candidate's needs – great businesses already booked to attend include Nationwide and Sodexo.

The pre-registration process will guarantee registrants entry to the event ensuring they don't miss out. Plus, all job seekers who register before the 2nd September will be automatically entered into a free prize draw to win an iPad Mini.

Joanne Harwood, Group Category Manager at Johnston Press, said: "Our aim is to help candidates and employers to connect all over the country. With busy lifestyles searching for that perfect job can be a time-consuming exercise, especially when trying to juggle existing work commitments. A virtual experience, which results in the same outcome by helping job seekers find better opportunities at the convenience of their homes, can only benefit job seekers."

Job seekers interested in the fair are encouraged to sign up for free today at www.jobstodaycareerfair.com to ensure they are guaranteed entry from the 2nd September.

Businesses can find out how to get involved by contacting 0114-299 6173 or emailing info@jobstoday.co.uk

SPORT

Wilder's happy with listed duo

O'Toole and Hackett impressing Cobblers boss in pre-season

FOOTBALL

Cobblers boss Chris Wilder says he has been delighted with the application and attitude of transfer-listed pair John-Joe O'Toole and Chris Hackett since they returned to pre-season training.

The pair were told they were surplus to requirements at Sixfields at the end of last season, but as yet there has been no interest in them from other clubs,

They have been back training with the Cobblers since the players returned to work on June 22, and are this week with the squad at their training camp in Brighton.

O'Toole and Hackett both played the first half of Sunday's opening pre-season friendly at Sileby Rangers, which the Cobblers won 1-0..

"Their attitude has to be good, and I have spoken to them about it," said Wilder. "Nothing is set and certain in football, so they are with us.

"The thing is that John-Joe and Hacks have to do it for themselves. My position hasn't changed on them, but if things don't happen then they will be staying with us.

"I thought the attitude of both of them on Sunday was outstanding.

"I am not the type of manager that is going to chuck them in reserves, let them train on their own and give them rubbish training kit and stuff like that.

"We don't work like that, because the decisison (to put them on the transfer list) was not a personal decision.

"Both of them have come back in good shape, and they don't do themselves any harm the way they go about their business."

Town travelled to Brighton on Monday, and took on Worthing on Tuesday. They will finish the week by playing Burgess Hill on Saturday.

The players have also been training throughout the days they are away, with Wilder keen to build up fitness as well as team spirit ahead of what will be a long campaign.

"A lot is talked about team spirit, but it is only a good team spirit when you are doing well," said the Cobblers boss.

"You have to have that spirit and you have to be together as a group.

"People look at footballers going away and think they'll be on the beach, but that's not the case.

"We can't train from 9am to 9pm, but they have certainly been working extremely hard."

PUSHING ON John-Joe O'Toole and Chris Hackett may have been transfer listed by Cobblers but they are not letting it affect them

Saint Myler plays down tussle for 10 shirt

SAINTS star Stephen Myler insists he is not trying to compete against the other three fly-halves in England's initial training squad despite there being a dream World Cup place up for grabs.

Myler might have been part of a Saints side which finished top of the Aviva Premiership table but it is Bath's George Ford and Saracens' Owen Farrell that dominate the discussion of who should start at number ten when England face Fiji

RUGBY UNION

on September 18 in the opening pool match.

As expected, Myler does not view the situation in the same way but stated making the final 31-man squad in late August, and ultimately the starting XV, is not the priority.

"George and Owen have a little bit more exposure than I have at this level but I have played against them and we are all working towards the same goal here," said Myler.

"We are not thinking 'I'm competing against him and him', we are trying to help the team and that is our role as a number ten. We have to get the best out of the team and we listen to the coaches and how they want the game to be played and what we need to bring out of the players around us and out of ourselves.

"We are trying to be the best we can be first and foremost individually from a fitness point of view but we have a job to do for the team. That is my focus and I'm sure it is for the other lads."

The 30-year-old is part of a 50-man training squad that will be cut down to 31 a few weeks before the competition.

One suspects it would currently be a time of mixed emotions for the players whose places are uncertain: the excitement of what could be a life-changing tournament, combined with the nervousness of potentially missing out.

"Personally I'm not trying to think like that. I'm trying to think 'we are here and we are working as hard as possible to be in as good shape as we can and the end goal is England win the World Cup'," added Myler.

Saints' campaign finished with a narrow play-off semi-final defeat to Saracens in May and despite finishing top of the Aviva Premiership table, Myler believes Jim Mallinder's side didn't reach top gear.

Their chances of reaching that desired level have been boosted by the signing of Munster's JJ Hanrahan but the arrival of the talented fly-half does not concern Myler; in fact it is the opposite.

He said: "It certainly adds to the strength of our squad and our team. It is only a good thing.

"It is hard to play almost every minute of every game, especially this season when there were a few niggles.

"We have that strength in the squad with England and we also need it at club level."

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